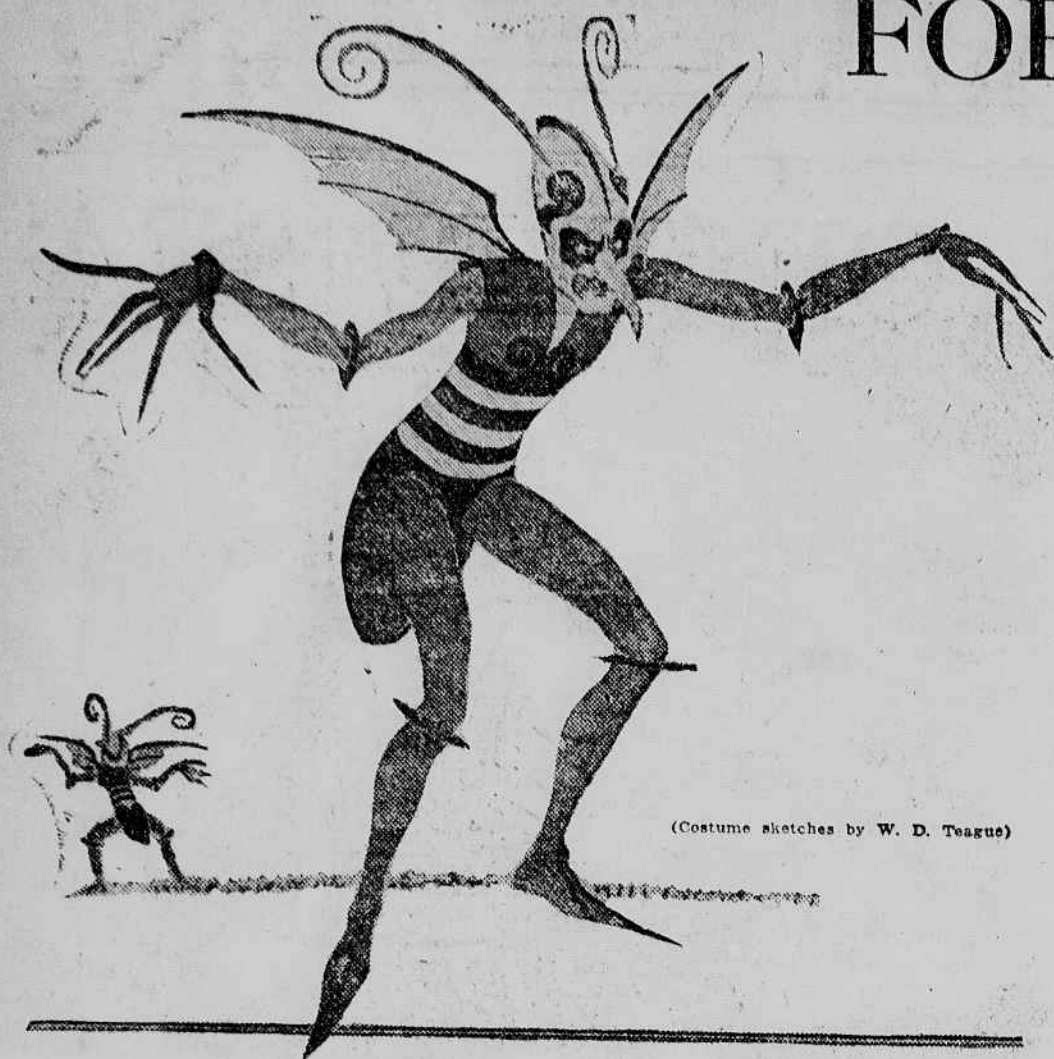


FOREST HILLS ON THE MAT



Mr. Culex Pipiens, Father of the Mosquitoes

EVER since the day Bill Shakespeare and Dick Burbage became majority stockholders in the Globe Theater and got the London public where they wanted it, it has been the proud prerogative of the stage to hold the mirror up to nature. Shakespeare himself got away with a lot of that stuff.

But it is an even pleasanter if somewhat more perilous pastime to hold the mirror up to your neighbors. Done in an absolutely informal and care-free manner, it is apt to land you at the nearest First Aid Station. But managed with the more or less privileged methods of the stage, it may be negotiated quite smoothly—indeed, with the neighbors themselves joyously helping out the process.

The central idea, of course, is the community play, that constantly more popular form of entertainment in which a group of people get together to write and act something about the place where they live and the people who live in it. Everybody is supposed to help if only to shift the scenery or contribute a rosette toward the costumes. Then, everybody having become a party to the conspiracy, the playwright, local product though he be, feels considerably freer to discuss his immediate surroundings.

In Forest Hills Gardens, down Long Island way, which Sinclair Lewis called—oh, what difference does it make what Sinclair Lewis called it! Anyway, in Forest Hills Gardens (please accent the Gardens) they discovered the fun of the thing several years ago. It began in a small way in a small park, with a mighty small expenditure, and gradually grew through the seasons, until now the community play, presented on the Fourth of July, has become a really important institution with a real tradition back of it.

There are no bylaws or book of rules or that sort of thing. But the people who live there do insist on doing it themselves to the last detail. And as time passed they learned to do it so well that folks from other places began to say they were pretty darned good at it. Other communities have borrowed their plays, and some of these fellows who write learned books about neighborhood development and village advancement and all that sort of jolly rot have got on their trail. Even a few regularly enrolled, hard-boiled dramatic critics, the kind who live only to repel the idea that every typewriter contains at least one good play, have condescended to be vaguely aware of what is going on in the classic (please do not print this "classic," Mr. Compositor) groves of Olivia Park.

More or less encouraged, therefore, by these symptoms of appreciation, the simple villagers have gone into the matter rather thoroughly this year and mean to spread themselves. With a big cast, an ample orchestra, a well-oiled committee, steered by Mrs. George Smart, a well filled treasury and a balanced producing organization which calls itself The Garden Players, they have made all preparations to discuss themselves and the place they live as completely and soul-satisfyingly as you please.

A pleasant feature of this year's cast is the number of children selected to portray mosquitoes. This insures the mothers' vote at the outset. Harvey T. Warren, an overseas veteran, is the director in charge, and the

Main Mosquito is to be Walter Hartwig, executive director of the Drama League. To him falls the peculiarly acceptable task of making snobbery, pro-Germanism and Bolshevism ridiculous.

Judging by the title of the play by Ralph E. Renaud, "The Flying Door Mat, an Exposition of Relativity in One Lesson," it would seem that Professor Einstein might be the master of ceremonies. But no. Old Doc Einstein has faded away like Winnecke's comet into the bleak vacuum of German science, leaving us weltering in the tale of his mysteries. The relativity involved in the play is more psychological than metaphysical (my, how some people can sling the King's English!) and hangs upon the theme that our own troubles often seem very insignificant when viewed in the light of other people's worries. A mosquito in Forest Hills, for example, seems decidedly threatening until one considers the possibility of meeting a Bolshevik in Russia. A good many of us consider our income taxes a bit of a burden, but we wouldn't if we had just escaped from some country where they omitted the incomes as well as the taxes. Thus, you see, any opinion on your difficulties or condition in life becomes, as we said in the first place, purely a question of relativity.

Anyway, that is what the Gardens playwright says, and he says it for about an hour and a half. This is how he does it—

He invents an engaged couple, Mr. Forest and Miss Hills, who, like most other engaged couples, are ardently hunting a house to live in and a competent cook to keep them alive. They have managed to get hold of a magic wishing rug—in other words, The Flying Door Mat—which, with a little persuasion, jitneys its owners around through the circumscribed like a well trained aeroplane. The old door mat, being an exceedingly wise little rug in its own generation, with a well developed knowledge of what is best for young engaged

couples, lands them in Forest Hills. They are delighted. It is exactly what they wanted. Even the name of the place has a flavor of their wedding announcements. The crowd gathered in Olivia Park for the Fourth of July entertainment makes a hit with them—just the sort of people they like. Trees, grounds, houses—everything is ideal. In fact, every prospect pleases until—

B-z-z-z-z-z!
Mosquitoes descend upon them—mosquitoes led by the Father of Mosquitoes himself, Mr. Culex Pipiens, as the entomologists call him. Now Mr. Culex isn't really an insect. He is a symbol. In fact, he explains himself thus:

"Listen to me, folks—
Get me straight,
I'm the particular thing you hate.
I'm the mythology
Of your psychology—
I am the thing you abominate!
To some, a mosquito,
I buzz in your ear.
To Congress a veto,
To statesmen a sneer—
I'm the customs, the views
That you do not indorse;
I'm a fit of the blues
Or a touch of remorse.
I'm the black disappointment
That holds you in grapple;
I'm the fly in your ointment,
The worm in your apple.
Ha, ha!
Get me straight,
I'm the thing that you hate,
I'm whatever you chance to abominate!"

Nevertheless Miss Hills is not reassured. She is suffering from a Mosquito Complex. Her father happened to be an inventor, the very fellow who first produced mosquito netting—and the darned things have been after her ever since.

Matters indeed look dark for a moment. The bottle of citronella which Mr. Forest always carries for protection, fails to function. Only the prompt intervention of their Good Fairy, who advises them to climb on the Flying Door Mat saves the situation. Almost as quickly as it takes to think it, the accommodating rug has whisked them over the Atlantic and landed them gently in—

ENGLAND, the Land of Things as They Are. England is also lovely. Charming thatched cottages, suggesting old home week in a hayfield, beef eaters grazing on the velvet lawns—everything, indeed, suggestive of a sweet, sylvan civilization. Here they are greeted by a rather extraordinary person, who introduces himself as David Wark Griffith Lloyd George.

Lloyd George proceeds to tell them that he not only wrote the complete history of England, but produced the entire British nation at an expense previously unheard of in motion pictures. This he proudly holds as one of the most stupendous feats of the imagination. In fact, he doesn't believe that Wells himself could have done any better.

The picture-making Premier insists that his production offers everything the human race has a right to ask for—marvelous old ruins, modern politics, croquet, curates, quaint village customs—everything that makes for the well-known British atmosphere. Mr. Forest and Miss Hills are fascinated. The optimism of the man is hypnotic. He is so delightfully mendacious. They are about to lease the first structure they can get a lease on when they hear once more the dreaded buzz of the winged stingers.

Lloyd George, of course, denies point blank that there are any mosquitoes in England—in fact, he refuses to see them, when, adorned with spats and monocles, Mr. Culex leads them in.

Alas, there ARE mosquitoes in England—horrid ones, snobbish little supporters of Caste and Vested Interests. Indeed, they admit it, chanting:

"We are the English Upper Classes.
Haw! Haw!
The Noble Nobs and the Titled Asces.
Haw! Haw!
My word, but we are superior,
Trained to a perfectly frigid exterior.
Far above others who merely exist,
WE'RE on His Majesty's visiting list!
We are the English Upper Strata,
Warbling our little exclusive cantata,
Slaves of the Monocle, slightly ironical,
Holding our privileges strictly canonical.
We are the sons
Of the big, big guns,
Gazing at others with infinite pity.
WE are His Majesty's Steering Committee.
Caste! Caste! Caste! Caste!
That's what WE'RE out for, first to last!"

With a few pointed questions and free use of their proboscis the beastly little snobs dispose of that dear Mr. Lloyd George and remove him entirely from the scene. The two home-seekers are left debating where they can find an untroubled happiness, and Miss Hills is none too pleased when the Good Fairy appears with a number of snappy suggestions. Indeed, she manages to leave the Good Fairy behind when she and Mr. Forest embark on the rug, which this time lands them in—

GREECE, the Land of Things as They Were. They are received in splendor by Constantine, King of the Hellenes. He affably desires to be known to them only as Tino, who adores all Americans, including the Princess Anastasia. Tino instructs them how to look back over twenty-five centuries through the curious telescope he carries to the glories that were Greece when the hamadrads and the fauns were abroad among the hyacinths. They are completely bowled over, decide to send for the Victrola and spend the rest of their lives in more or less classic dancing. But suddenly the ominous buzz drifts down the wind. Tino dismisses it merely as court gossip, yet in a moment Mr. Culex marches in at the head of a goose-stepping band of pronouncedly pro-German mosquitoes appropriately attired in pickelhaubes. He hastens to deliver himself of the following message from the former Kaiser:

"Achtung! Attend, mosquitoes! Flip up your wings, rejoice!
For as I read you'll recognize once more Your Master's Voice."

And proceeds to read from an important looking official document:

"To all devout pro-Germans dispersed throughout the world:

We most regretfully announce our battle-flag is furled.

Spurlis Versenkt our submarines, our shining armor smashed,

It cannot be denied our hope to boss the show is dashed.

Paris remains verboten, Verdun is still unstormed.

We slay no helpless children any more; we have reformed.

But, oh, my little German friends, it was not OUR design

To sign their stupid treaty upon the dotted line. So spread your stinky lies about and keep your eyeballs wet.

And—England, France, America, the boos!—we'll beat them yet!

Weep copious quarts for Germany, but shed no kindly tear

For those who tried to thwart our will—for them reserve your sneer.

Speak gently of the Fatherland, but bitterly assail

The Great Allies who tripped us up and caused our feet to fail,
And if you keep dissension sown where friendship ought to spring
We may not have to ante up a single blessed thing!
We'll fight no more, but lie and cheat and let our debtors dance;
For so we hope to govern still the beggar land of France.
Oh cease not friends from worrying with plot and counter plot
All those who bow not down before Der Good Old German Gott."

Throughout these instructions Tino capers with delight. He is overwhelmed both at the nobility of the sentiments and the grandeur of their expression. But Miss Hills and Mr. Forest, being good Americans, are properly disgusted. They seek to hear no more of that sort of stuff and hurry to the rug, which lifts them lightly across a thousand miles or so of fairly fresh atmosphere and deposits them in—

RUSSIA, the Land of Things as They Never Should Have Been. They can tell at once it is Russia by the smell. And if they needed any further proof, both Lenine and Trotsky are there, announcing:
"We are the cheekey,
The sneaky, Bolsheviki.
You've heard a lot of us, beyond a doubt.
Gaze on our features—
We are the crafty creatures
Who grabbed this land and turned it inside out.
We murder, we pillage
In every town and village;
We rob them on a highly novel plan.
But they love expropriation,
They delight in slow starvation,
Because it means the Brotherhood of Man.
Of course our method varies,
We've Chinese mercenaries
To carry peace to Poland and Japan.
And when, at home, we kill 'em,
It's only to install 'em
With the spirit of the Brotherhood of Man.
Man! Man!"

To spread abroad the Brotherhood of Man." Both the Red leaders are delighted to welcome Mr. Forest, assuming that he is the newly appointed Ambassador from the United States whom they have been expecting. After some lighter persiflage from Lenine to the effect that he crucifies 'em and Trotsky pacifies 'em, he hastens to the business of the occasion thus:

Lenine—And now I think we'd better proceed at once to reestablish trade relations. Er—have you a watch?

Mr. Forest (instinctively feeling for it)—A watch?

Lenine—Ah, yes. I see you have. (Dexterously frisking him). Thank you!

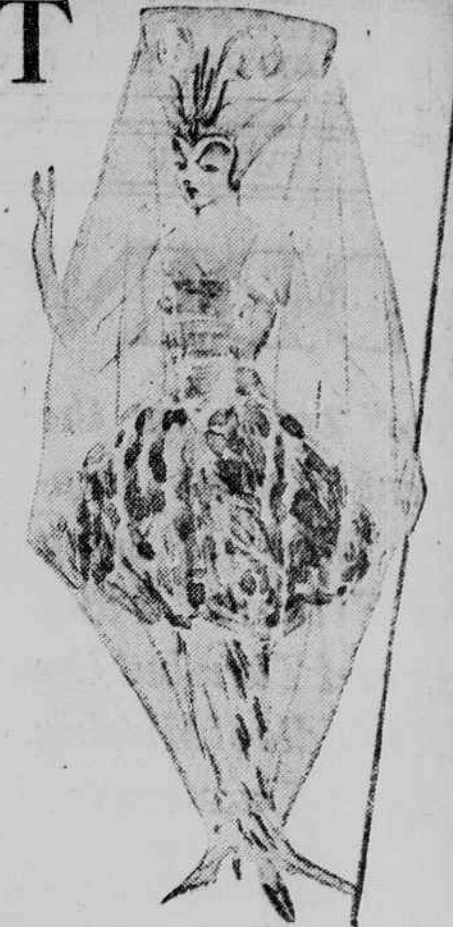
Miss Hills—Harold, he's taking your watch!

Lenine (scowling at her)—My dear young lady if I hear any more of these irrelevant remarks from you I'll—I'll have you nationalized! (She subsides. He proceeds with Mr. Forest). And a wallet, Your Excellency? Ah, yes; thank you again! Come, Trotsky, help me off with this coat. (They remove Mr. Forest's coat. Lenine puts the watch and wallet in his pocket, examines the coat and then hands it to Trotsky). You may have the coat, Trotsky.

Trotsky (admiring it)—Stylish, ain't it? I used to make pants myself once in the Bronx. (Approaching Mr. Forest and putting a hand on his belt, wistfully)—You couldn't spare the pants, too, could you?

Mr. Forest (breaking away)—Lay off there, you fellows! Cut the rough stuff! I'd like to know what I'm getting out of this.

Lenine (suavely)—Ah, my dear Ambassa-



The Good Fairy

dor, I'm afraid you don't understand the Soviet system!

Mr. Forest—Ambassador he hanged! I want my coat!

Lenine—But, your excellency, nobody is allowed to have any property over here. It's against the law.

Mr. Forest (beginning to get angry, indicating Trotsky)—He's got my coat, hasn't he! And you've got my watch and wallet.

Lenine (petulantly)—My dear fellow, rid yourself of these old-fashioned notions—del! It just happens that we're the government over here. The property isn't in our possession, or yours, either, as long as it's held by the government. Of course, when we die, if the watch is still running—

Trotsky (putting on the coat)—And there's any wear left in the coat—

Lenine—And there's anything left in the wallet, it becomes the property of the proletariat. That's clear, isn't it?

Mr. Forest—And I don't get anything at all, eh?

Lenine—But, my dear sir, you don't seem to realize you're getting an education—a liberal education. Of course, if you'd like some rubles, just for the sentiment of the thing, we can give you all you want—a whole haul—all the printing presses can turn out.

Trotsky (proudly)—And not a counterfeit among 'em, either.

Mr. Forest—Shucks! What good will rubles do me?

Lenine—Ah, that's just it! What good will they do anybody? That's exactly what we're trying to demonstrate.

Of course, this sort of education, liberal though it be, develops a little peevishness on Mr. Forest's part. He finally characterizes Lenine and Tavarish Trotsky as a couple of porch climbers and stick-up men. Lenine thereupon denounces him as a bourgeois spy, utters a few choice phrases in Russian, which probably correspond to "Chuck 'em in the hoose-gow," and summons the Red army. Miss Hills is paralyzed with fright, for the Red army is nothing but a lot more mosquitoes led, as usual, by Mr. Culex. To be sure, they wear Bolshevik whiskers and carry Bolshevik bombs, but they are nevertheless unmistakably mosquitoes.

But Mr. Forest manages to trip one of them up, at which a general cry of "Counter revolution!" is raised. Bombs explode, pistols crack and in the general confusion Mr. Forest and Miss Hills escape to the rug. Almost in the wink of an eye they are—

BACK IN FOREST HILLS. Yet, strangely enough, they find Mr. Culex, whom they just left in Russia, waiting for them on the lawn. His proboscis is as sharp as ever, his appetite is whetted, but this time they know he is neither a snob, a pro-German nor a Bolshevik, but just a plain, ordinary Long Island mosquito. Mr. Forest decides, as he appears to be the only blot on the landscape, to go to bat with him at once. They belabor each other furiously, but, unfortunately, the mosquito is having all the best of it. It develops that Mr. Forest is very ticklish, especially in the ribs, and Mr. Culex manages to reach just the right spots.

Our hero has almost laughed himself to death when Miss Hills, our heroine, remembers the Good Fairy, entreating her not to leave them. The Fairy condescends to appear, hands Mr. Forest a magic talisman, which looks suspiciously like an oil can, and at once changes the tide of battle. Mr. Culex, now well oiled, graciously consents to die, Forest Hills Gardens immediately becomes the loveliest spot in the world and—

Everybody is happy ever after.

THE MYSTERIES OF THE SEA

(Continued from page one)

whole crew lost their lives. Then came the natural reversion to the ancient question:

"What but a sea serpent could have caused the destruction of these people?"

A faker attracted considerable excitement when he made a long-winded "confession" in which he said he had shipped as a member of the crew and had slain everybody aboard. Finally the public stopped speculating about the fate of the Marie Celeste, and the little brig simply passed into the chronicles of unsolvable mysteries of the sea.

Such mysteries are innumerable. The latest to engage public attention is that of the Cyclops, the gigantic collier which was the first ship with wireless equipment to join the Port of Missing Ships. The Cyclops was loaded with manganese and left the West In-

dies March 4, 1918, for an Atlantic port. She was under Lieutenant Commander George W. Worley and had 15 officers, 221 men and 57 passengers aboard. It was thought that at the close of the war some word concerning the destruction of the Cyclops at German hands would be received, but no light has been shed on the mystery from enemy sources. The giant collier disappeared without leaving a trace and without flashing a message that was caught.

Those who contend that the recent disappearances of ships are due to natural agencies and not to pirates have plenty of background for their theory in maritime history. In spite of the great improvements in ships many disappearances have been chronicled in recent years, with no question of piracy brought up. A case in point is that of the Naronic, a freighter, first of the twin screw type for cargo trade. The Naronic had eight bulkheads and was called the biggest, safest and swiftest steamship of her time. She sailed for Liverpool and disappeared, nothing but a cap-sized lifeboat being found weeks later.

In the days of the sidewheelers and sailing vessels total disappearances were frequent. The City of Glasgow, in 1851, sailed from England with 480 passengers, most of them emigrants, bound for Castle Garden. No trace of her was found. Two years later the Pacific, of the Collins Line, started from New York with 186 passengers. For months she was searched for in vain.

Other ships left some faint hints regarding their fate. The President is believed to have foundered in a gale off the New England coast. Another ship saw her in a storm, making heavy going of it. The President had left New York March 11, 1841, among her passengers being Tyrone Power, the Irish actor. Two months later a bottle was washed ashore on Cape Cod with this message: "President sunk in storm."

In 1870 the City of Boston, with 200 passengers, left Liverpool never to return. Some of her wreckage was found months later. No one knows exactly what happened to the Portland, which left Boston in the fall of 1898, but it is believed that an extra heavy sea caught

her under the paddle wheel and overturned her, with the loss of everybody aboard.

On August 28, 1883, the Inchutha left Calcutta for Hull with a cargo of wheat, and a day later the Cherubini left Sunderland for Geneva with coal, and neither was ever heard from. On March 9, 1885, the Magneta was seen passing out of the English Channel for Singapore and was never sighted again. The Yula Maru was found in midocean with eight dead men on deck. What became of the rest of her crew never was known.

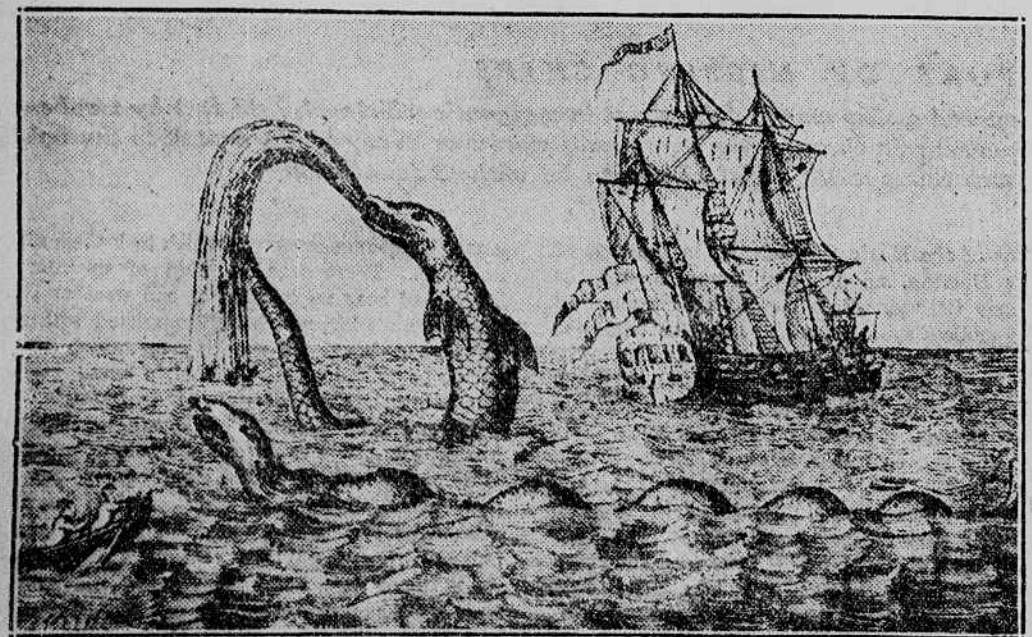
The Great Lakes have had similar tragedies. Also there were pirates on the inland seas in the days of King Strang.

One of the major mysteries of the lakes is that of the Chicora, a passenger steamer which left St. Joseph, Mich., for Chicago on a stormy winter night and was never heard from again, not so much as a spar being found. The crack steamer Alpena was within thirty miles of Chicago when she vanished, leaving no trace, fifty-seven people being lost.

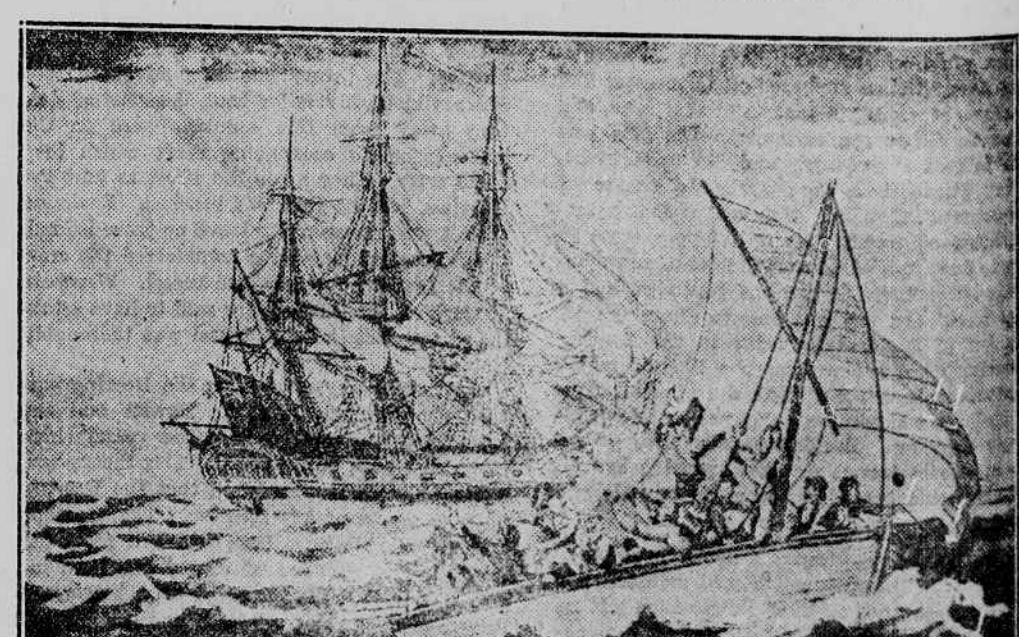
On Lake Superior many a craft has gone to the bottom on account of the "little ice devils" that form on the bow in freezing weather. One of the craft so lost was the Bannockburn, which left Duluth in "ice devil" time and paid the penalty. The wraith of the Bannockburn can be seen to-day, so Lake Superior legend has it, always sinking by the head in the clutch of the "ice devils."

Lost ships began getting into literature in an early day. "The Flying Dutchman" sailed in the imagination of seamen long before it had Wagnerian music as an accompaniment to its wanderings. In Puritan New England there were many phantom ships that had a hold on the popular imagination. Cotton Mather tells of such a craft that was spoken of in the pulpits of New Haven. A new ship left that port in January, 1647, for her maiden trip and was never heard from. Six months later, after a thunderstorm at sunset, a ship like her was seen sailing up the river against the wind. Drawing nearer, she gradually disappeared. Thanks were offered in New Haven pulpits that God had granted this confirmation of the fears of the townspeople.

A Salem minister in the eighteenth century



Sea monsters, large enough to destroy ships, have been blamed for the disappearance of many a craft



Captain Bligh of the Bounty set adrift in a small boat by a mutinous crew in the South Seas, 1787